

POWER

“the gospel is the power of God unto salvation” (Romans 1:16)

My Father Passed Away When I Was Twenty

by Anthony Mertz

He was only forty-eight; I was only twenty-one. It was September 2004, and I was experiencing that unique moment in life you know is coming and dread all the same: my father was dead. For nearly half of my life, Donald L. Mertz II was very ill; by the time I was fourteen, he suffered from debilitating dementia. I never got to know him as an adult. I never got to know him “man-to-man.” He never sat me down to share great life wisdom. He never taught me much about God; he was not even a Christian. Yet, there were several things he did that have forever framed me as a servant of Christ because they were so very Christ-like. The wisdom he shared with me was not with words, but by example.

The most important thing he gave me was his time. He spent lots of time with me. Although he loved watching sports, when I wanted to go outside, he never made me feel like a burden. I never cared for watching sports; and, as much as he loved them, he never forced it on me. If I wanted to do something outside, he always acquiesced. We would throw baseball, kick soccer ball, shoot hoops, and generally do active things. He always put time with me above time watching the game, even if his favorite team was on!

Not only did he indulge my desire to go outside, he indulged my specific interests. He would stand and watch me watch others play arcade games for hours. He would watch me while I watched others having fun! He cared very little for video games, so his desire to do this was all about me. Every now and then he could afford to give me a dollar or two, but that didn't happen often. Back then, most games only cost a quarter. So, at max, I got to play for around five to ten minutes, and then I watched... for hours!

Not one time was this discouraged. Instead, he embraced my interests, and was happy to see me happy. I'm sure this seems silly to many, as that was a lot of time spent in front of video games. However, I was a very imaginative child who loved the visual arts. I don't know if he fully realized that he was nurturing that side of me; but, by encouraging my interests, simply by allowing them to happen, he influenced many profitable choices I would make later in life. In this, he taught me to become, as Paul said: “...all things to all men, that I might by all means save some” (1 Corinthians 9:22). I learned to get involved with others. I learned to really care about them. I learned to nurture my children's interests, even if I don't “get” them.

James said that our life is like a vapor (James 4:14). Here for a little while and then – POOF – gone! We can be obsessed with ourselves, and our own time, keeping it all for ourselves. Or we can love others and share our time with them. In Matthew 20:28, Jesus said: “the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.” If God thought enough of us to come in the flesh and give us his time, how little we must think of others when we refuse to give them our time! My earthly father made a lot of mistakes. Often, he was a terrifying man whose rage knew no bounds. Yet, even a man with such struggles was able to shine with the love of Christ by merely giving me his time.

Whether or not he meant to, by his actions, my father taught me an eternal truism of

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parenthood: their time before mine, their needs before my wants. Because of this, I learned to give my children the time they deserve, and never, ever, ever, make them feel guilty about it; and, in the case of my oldest (a disabled special needs child who may never walk, talk, or feed himself), I must give him time – dedicated, authentic time. My family just relocated 550 miles for him. I'm in the process of possibly changing careers for him. He may never even know what his mother and I have given up for him; nor will my father ever know how much I owe him for shaping me to be able to care for such a child. Yet, here I am, and all because my father shared with me the wisdom of sharing time.

Will You Help?

The Gospel Broadcasting Network has prepared a short video we would like to share, and would like you to share it as well. Please, share it with your friends and family.



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THANK YOU, DAD

by Aaron J. Cozort

I was about six years old. It was summer in Eastern Kentucky. At that time in my life, hardships abounded. I was working with my brothers and mother in the burdensome task of mowing the lawn of the church building. The mowing wasn't that bad, but I was still small enough that my brothers could push the mower much faster than I. So I was presented the hand-clippers and given the joyful task of snipping the grass around the parking lot's curb. A thankless task and one that would have taken very little time with a weed-eater, which we did not have and would not have been able to be use at the time anyway.

So I took my clippers and did what we too often do... I did what I considered to be a "good enough job." I didn't work with concern, method, or any real effort. I did not care if I missed "a few blades" here or there.

When I thought I was finished, my mother saw the poor job that I had done and sent me into the church building to talk to the preacher... my Father. He said something to me I have never forgotten--though not always successfully heeded. He said, "If a job is worth doing, it is worth doing right the first time. And son, doing right the first time, takes much less time than having to do it twice." Which was of course what I had to do.

It was a small thing to an adult, but it was the experience, the anguish (of working while my brothers were not), and the truth of the lesson that has made it stick with me for over twenty years. Paul wrote to servants,

And whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not to men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance; for you serve the Lord Christ (Col 3:23-24).

Christians, we must work. Striving always to do it right the first time. Thank you, Dad.

If you have received Southaven church of Christ's bulletin, *The Searcher*, in the past and would like to continue to receive it, it will be emailed weekly and you can sign up to receive it at our website. Visit our website to sign up today! WWW.SOUTHAVENCOC.ORG



LESSONS FROM MY FATHER

by Michael Clarke

Many of you will remember my time as a little boy at Southaven. I was a typical “preachers kid”, one who would stir up trouble by running around with my friends and being a neurotic child. You may also remember my father sending me to one of the two pews that are located in the lobby to sit in timeout until it was time to leave. I learned so many lessons from my dad while I lived under his roof, and know that I will continue to be blessed by his many years of knowledge and life experience. Here though are a few key lessons I feel have truly stuck with me over the years.

E.H.I.P.

Everything Has Its Place. This became quite popular one day when dad came home and said to my siblings and me: “It is getting old seeing messy rooms, so I am starting something new. EHIP.” We looked around shocked and confused as we had not heard of this concept. We thought it was a typical “dad thing” and we truly learned to dislike this new practice. How it would work is as follows: 1. A coat is laying on the couch. 2. Dad sees the coat. 3. Waits for the owner to walk by. 4. Playfully shout EHIP! Pointing at the coat. Looking back now I know that he was not just trying to get us to pick up our stuff so we could be a “pristine family” but that we would understand things have a place. **Ecclesiastes 3:1-8** teaches this “Everything Has Its Place” mentality. My father may have known (as many times the lessons we were taught were not just meant to deal with the physical but also focus on the spiritual) that he was trying to teach us this Godly principle. I can tell you it stuck.

FAMILY IS IMPORTANT

This is a big one I want to make sure everyone reading understands. My father was like Superman to me growing up. Even after a long day preaching and shaking hands with the brethren he spent time with his family. We would get home, eat dinner and then play a game called “diving” (mom did not love this game). The concept of this game is to take a junior sized football and throw it at different parts of the living room and us children would dive to catch it (again Mom did not approve). We loved this game. It was a time for us to laugh and play with our daddy. Now that I am preaching, I truly understand from a physical standpoint how much that took out of him. I have no children, yet when I get home from a long Sunday I am spent. This superhero would preach all day and still take time for his

own family. Yes, he traveled and was gone from time to time, but I don’t remember the week(s) he spent away. I remember how he would break his back to make sure we knew that he loved us. I will truly have no problem practicing what Paul wrote to Timothy in 1 Timothy 5:4 My father would be the first to tell you that no parent is perfect, but I will wholeheartedly disagree with anyone that tries to convince me that preachers (or even working men) cannot spend time with their families. I know better. I can remember coming out late at night because I needed something to drink or could not sleep, and there would be dad furiously typing and working hard. Working late because he wanted to spend time with us. That makes me feel so loved. Then he would get up the next day and go to the office and keep working. Such a hard-working man. Such a Godly father (Yes, I am biased about who the best dad in the world is).

WORRY ABOUT YOU

This final lesson for this article is huge for me. I have always had a difficulty letting things go. If I would see someone doing something wrong, I would want it to be fixed. This as you can imagine did not make me popular at times among my brother and sister, as I would tattle in a heartbeat. I remember one particular conversation with dad, though, where I was truly frustrated with something someone else had done. Dad calmly asked me if it affected me. The answer was no, it did not directly affect me. Dad was right, I need not worry about things that don’t affect me. I am reminded of what Paul said in Philippians 1:15-18.

Some indeed preach Christ even from envy and strife, and some also from good will: The former preach Christ from selfish ambition, not sincerely, supposing to add affliction to my chains; but the latter out of love, knowing that I am appointed for the defense of the gospel. What then? Only that in every way, whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is preached; and in this I rejoice, yes, and will rejoice.

My father is one of the greatest men I know. Those at Southaven will remember all the wonderful works that he accomplished while preaching there. The most important thing he did in my life though, was teach me how to be a man. I am still learning, but I know if I listen he will help me get there with God’s help.



POWER from the ORIGINAL

A GREEK LESSON I LEARNED FROM MY FATHER

by Daniel F. Cates

As I write this article, I can see on the bookshelf in front of me what was likely the greatest Greek lesson that my dad, Curtis A. Cates, Sr., ever taught me. The lesson was not one about a particular word--although Dad had a thorough knowledge of the Greek (and Hebrew for that matter) of the Bible (see for example his comparison of terms for "assembly" in his book on *Worship: Heaven's Imperative or Man's Innovations*, pages 33,34). He even had a working knowledge of the more recent etymology of words (note his providing the Anglo-Saxon background of "worship" in that same book, page 16). I can remember many sermons and classes taught by him in which he delved deeply into the vocabulary of the original text. That use or application of the Greek was really merely a product of his greatest lesson.

The most important lesson I learned from Dad, did have to do with vocabulary; while not a particular word, the lesson was about learning the vocabulary. What I can see on the shelf in front of me is a number of flash cards; in fact, I can see over a thousand flash cards which he passed down to me. The majority are pre-printed; however, many of the flash cards are hand written. The majority are New Testament Greek, the remaining roughly 40 % are Biblical Hebrew. Along with those are many of my own and some of my daughter's. Why hers and mine? Because learning another language--any language--takes great study, effort, and attention to every detail.

If one reads a vocabulary list for a given chapter in a Greek grammar, he is not going to automatically have committed the words to memory; moreover, if he repeatedly looks back at the list, he is a step ahead but he still will not have likely committed the words to memory; however, if he has flash cards--even better if he has written his own flash cards, then he can have those words with him constantly and at every spare opportunity including standing in line at a store or even waiting for the commercials to end while watching a sporting event, he can look at them and test his ability to remember the words.

Only when one has a firm grasp of the vocabulary can one efficiently use charts that provide different meanings for the varied endings, for when he sees the root or stem, knowing the vocabulary word and any associated things like definite articles he can remember things like gender, case, etc. For instance, if he has memorized ἀπόστολος (second declension, nominative, masculine, singular) and

τούς (accusative, masculine, plural), then when he sees ἀποστόλους, then he can automatically know that he is dealing with "apostles" as the direct object of his sentence (second declension, accusative, masculine, plural).

The accents and breath marks on the Greek cards may be small and seemingly insignificant, but they are there because they are important. When he has been able to focus on one word, rather than a list of fifteen or twenty, then he will more easily know exactly how the word is pronounced; moreover, he will at a glance be able to determine, for example, whether a word in a verse is merely a definite article (ὁ) or a neuter relative pronoun (ὅ).

Those little cards may not seem too important, may seem a bit cumbersome, or even may bring back bad memories of having to memorize in school days; however, they are little treasures which hold a key for opening up foreign languages. Especially the ones on my bookshelf are treasured, because they have helped three generations to better understand the Bible.



POWER from the PAST

The archive of POWER is a vast storehouse of sound, doctrinal articles from some of the best writers in the brotherhood, past and present. The POWER from the Past articles will provide another generation of readers the opportunity to read the best of the best from previous POWER issues.

Life's Little Lessons

by Jerry W. Carmichael

In the words of Amos, "I am neither a prophet nor the son of a prophet..." But, I have lived over forty years on Earth, at this writing, and I've been married to the same woman for well over half of my life. We have raised two fine Christian daughters, and I've violated all the advice that my father and mother gave me at one time or another.

There is a chance that a young person does exist somewhere who is wise enough to heed the warnings of one who has already made the mistakes, and recovered from them. Facts are often heeded, advice seldom ever is! Remember, these are lessons from MY life. Others may not agree with all of the details but the principles ring true throughout the ages.

1. You won't understand the importance of sexual purity until after you are married. Stay pure anyway! I promise it is worth it.
2. Make, as one of your goals in life, a promise to never taste tobacco, alcohol or other drugs. If you are successful, you will be one of the most rare and envied people in the world!
3. Please do not buy into the American myth that true happiness and inner peace is the result of more things! The accumulation of material wealth has ABSOLUTELY NOTHING to do with real happiness! You may not understand this now, but you will.
4. Do not choose your partner for life based solely on physical looks. Stomachs enlarge, hairlines decrease, scalps become visible where they once were hidden, waistlines go steadily upward until trousers are worn slightly below the armpits. If the physical is all there is to your marriage IT CANNOT WORK!!
5. Care about what others think about your reputation, your influence, and your choices in life. This is a great restraining device to keep you from making mistakes early in life, for which you cannot make restitution later.
6. Never allow yourself to become selfish! The happy life is one which is lived in service to others.
7. Never be too serious to laugh at yourself.
8. Never laugh loudly and tell inappropriate jokes at somber occasions.
9. Remember: Intelligent people can communicate without profanity and can settle their conflicts without violence! (ALWAYS)
10. The majority is usually wrong in matters where it really counts.
11. Real life is made up of more than ball-playing, cheer-leading and baton twirling! Prepare for it while you have the chance!
12. Never fail to give an absolute minimum of 10% of all household income to the Lord. As income increases, so should your contribution.

